

ELINOR WONDERS WHY
Nice Plants You're Wearing
Premise – December 2nd, 2019
By Laura Sams and Robert Sams

Elinor's Question: What are clothes made of?

Logline: When Elinor needs a costume for Martha Cow's Fancy Plants Costume Party, the kids follow the 'clothing trail' backwards from the store, to the tailor, to the fabric mill, to the farm - to learn where cotton clothes really come from.

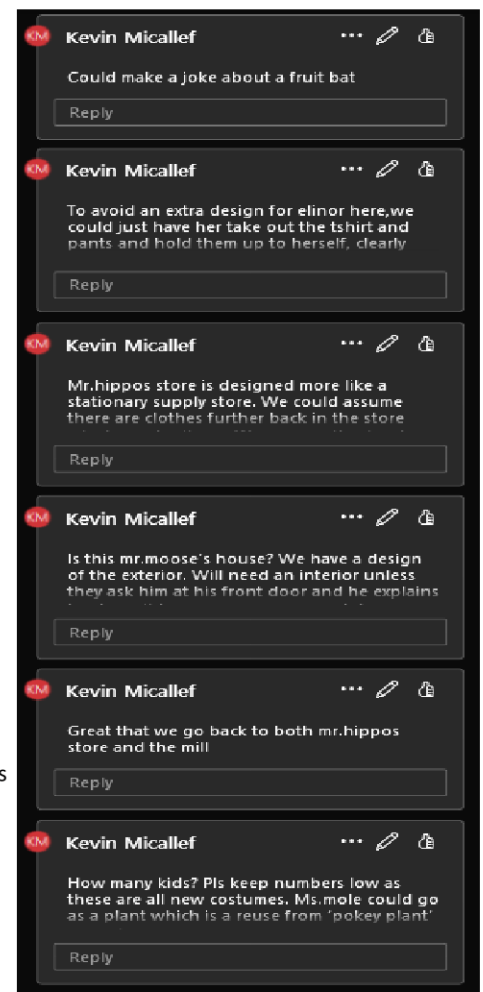
Curriculum Goals:

ES 3a) Ask questions about and discuss examples of how humans use Earth's resources (including soil and water) to meet their needs.

Open on Elinor's bedroom, where Elinor, Olive and Ari read an official invitation from Martha Cow. *Martha Cow cordially invites you to her annual Costume Party: This year's costume theme is: Fancy Plants! Wear your favorite plant-themed costume. See you soon! Tootamoo!* Ari decides to go as a fruit basket[1]. Olive decides to wear sunglasses shaped like big sunflowers. Elinor declares that she is going to wear her Super Carrot costume (and we see a picture of her wearing an orange shirt and pants, along with a carrot-shaped cape). Elinor pulls out her orange shirt and pants from her closet, but when she puts them on,[2] they are way too small. Apparently she's grown taller since she last wore her costume. The kids go with Mr. Rabbit to Mr. Hippo's store to get bigger clothes for Elinor. [3]

At the store, Mr. Hippo has run out of orange clothes! Elinor asks if he can make more, but he explains that he doesn't make clothes at the store. He buys them from Mr. Moose who sews the clothes together. Intrigued, the kids visit Mr. Moose[4], and the kids learn how clothes are made: cloth is cut into shapes and then sewn together. Whoa! But Mr. Moose is out of orange cloth and he says he gets his cloth from Mr. Beaver. The kids follow the trail to Mr. Beaver's mill[5], where Mr. Beaver shows them a loom and how cloth is made from threads spun from cotton. Wow! But where does cotton come from? Farmer Bear grows it! They go to Farmer Bear, who is harvesting some cotton. Whoa, clothes are made of cotton, which comes from a plant! Wow, Elinor did not know she was wearing plants! The kids sing a song as they recap the clothing trail.

At the party, Elinor's friends wear elaborate, funny, plant-themed costumes[6], but Elinor wears something simple: her regular shirt and pants she wore that day. Where is her plant-themed



costume? Her friends want to know why she isn't dressed like a plant. But she is! Elinor proudly announces that she is wearing plants. Her clothes are made from the cotton plant! She recaps what they learned yesterday. She holds up a basket of cotton and gives everyone their own piece of cotton. Everyone is amazed, and ultimately Elinor wins a prize for most surprising costume. Everyone looks down at their clothes and excitedly appreciates that. They all agree: plants are pretty cool.



Sara Notes:

Nice Plants- I like that this makes the connection that most things in our world come from

nature. The title is fun too . You will have to support the idea that "fruit bowl" is a part of/ comes from a "plant" and that a flower is a plant too. Most preschoolers will think about green bush type plants....at somepoint early on maybe list out what a plant is/ can be.

Nice Plants

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- Is there any reason to suspect that Farmer Bear's design will cause an issue if she's shown harvesting cotton? Alternatively, is there a modern system of harvesting cotton that does not call to mind enslaved persons gathering those crops?
- Any worries about her holding a basket of cotton, or handing it out to people for the same reasons as above? Maybe it can be sitting on a table and they can all come over and take a look instead of her handing it out from a basket.
- Everyone looks down at their clothes, but not every item of clothing comes from cotton.
- We also agree with Sara that a fruit bowl might not be the best choice. Olive loves bananas – can she just dress as a banana? And maybe Ari is something else?
- The cotton business seems to be the biggest concern of the three story ideas. Would love to get out ahead of that before it goes to script so we don't have to do any costly backtracking. It may be better to explore another kind of fabric altogether, like wool or something less historically fraught.